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SEP 13 2006

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims and add new claims 17 and 18 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for producing a blank for a component of laser active quartz glass, said method comprising the following steps:
 - a) providing a dispersion with a solids content of at least 40% by wt. which contains SiO₂ nanopowder and dopants, including a cation of one or more the rare earth metals or of the transition metals in a liquid,
 - b) granulation by moving the dispersion with withdrawal of moisture until the formation of a doped SiO₂ granulate of spherical porous granulate grains having a moisture content of less than 35% by wt. and a density of at least 0.95 g/cm³ is formed,
 - c) drying and purifying the SiO₂ granulate by heating said SiO₂ granulate to a temperature of at least 1000°C so as to form with formation of doped porous SiO₂ granules having an OH content of less than 10 ppm, and
 - d) sintering or melting the doped SiO₂ granules in a reducing atmosphere so as to form with formation of the blank of doped quartz glass, including a gas pressure sintering, which comprises the following steps:
 - aa) heating the SiO₂ granules to a melting temperature of at least 1600°C while applying and maintaining a negative pressure;
 - bb) holding the SiO₂ granules at the melting temperature at an overpressure ranging from 5 bar to 15 bar for a melting period of at least 30 min so as

to form with formation of the quartz glass blank;

cc) cooling the quartz glass blank while maintaining said ~~an~~ overpressure.

2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that an initial solids content of at least 50% by wt. is set in the dispersion.

3. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the SiO₂ granulate obtained according to step b) has a BET surface area ranging from 40 m²/g to 70 m²/g.

4. (currently amended) The method according to claim 3, wherein characterized in that the SiO₂ granulate obtained according to step b) has a BET surface area of at least 50 m²/g.

5. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the spherical porous granulate grains have a grain size of less than 500 µm.

6. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the SiO₂ granulate is dried and purified in ~~under~~ a chlorine-containing atmosphere.

7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the SiO₂ granulate is dried and purified at a temperature of at least 1050°C.

8. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the drying and purifying of the porous granulate is performed in ~~under~~ an oxygen-containing atmosphere.

9. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the porous SiO₂ granules obtained according to step c) have an OII content of less than

one wt ppm.

10. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the porous SiO₂ granules obtained according to step c) have a BET surface area of less than 20 m²/g.
11. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the SiO₂ granules are thermally densified prior to step d).
12. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the quartz glass blank is annealed at a temperature of at least 1120°C for a retention period of at least 40 hours h.
13. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the SiO₂ granules according to step d) are molten in a mold.
14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that the SiO₂ blank according to step d) is three-dimensionally homogenized.
15. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein characterized in that a bulk body with a radially inhomogeneous refractive index distribution is formed from SiO₂ granules of different refractive index, and that the bulk body is sintered or molten to obtain the SiO₂ blank.
16. (currently amended) A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising:
providing Use of an SiO₂ blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1,
and incorporating said SiO₂ blank into as a core material for a fiber laser, as an
optical filter or as a cladding tube for laser and transmitting said laser light

through said fiber.

17. (new) A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising: providing an SiO₂ blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1, and incorporating said SiO₂ blank into an optical filter; and transmitting said laser light through said optical filter.
18. (new) A method of transmitting laser light, said method comprising: providing an SiO₂ blank obtained according to a method as claimed in claim 1, and incorporating said SiO₂ blank into a cladding tube for a fiber; and transmitting said laser light through said fiber.